

What is claimed is:

- 1) A corn root preferential promoter fragment comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the following group of nucleotide sequences:
 - a) a nucleotide sequence comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID No 1 from the nucleotide at position 1 to the nucleotide at position 338 or SEQ ID No 2 from the nucleotide sequence at position 11 to the nucleotide at position 1196;
 - b) a nucleotide sequence comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID No 15 from the nucleotide at position 1 to the nucleotide at position 1280; and
 - c) a nucleotide sequence comprising the nucleotide sequence of an about 400 bp to an about 1300 bp DNA fragment hybridizing under stringent conditions with a DNA fragment having said nucleotide sequence mentioned under a) or b).
- 2) A corn root preferential promoter region comprising a corn root preferential promoter according to claim 1.
- 3) The corn root preferential promoter region according to claim 2, further comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID 1 from the nucleotide at position 339 to the nucleotide at position 366.
- 4) The corn root preferential promoter region according to claim 2, further comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID 14 from the nucleotide at position 1281 to the nucleotide at position 1308.
- 5) A chimeric gene comprising the following operably linked DNA regions
 - a) a corn root preferential promoter according to claim 1 ;
 - b) a heterologous DNA region encoding a biologically active RNA of interest;
 - and
 - c) a transcription termination and polyadenylation signal.
- 6) The chimeric gene according to claim 5, wherein said biologically active RNA encodes a protein of interest.

- 7) The chimeric gene according to claim 6, wherein said protein is a protein which when expressed in the cells of a plant confers pest or pathogen resistance to said plant.
- 8) The chimeric gene according to claim 7, wherein said protein is ISPA1 or ISPA2 from *Brevibacillus laterosporus*.
- 9) A plant cell comprising a chimeric gene according to any one of claims 5 to 8.
- 10) A plant comprising in its cells a chimeric gene according to any of claims 5 to 8.
- 11) The plant according to claim 10, which is a corn plant.
- 12) A seed of a plant comprising in its cells a chimeric gene according to any one of claims 5 to 8.
- 13) A method for expressing a biologically active RNA preferentially in the roots of a plant, said method comprising
 - a) providing the cells of the roots of said plants with a chimeric gene according to any one of claims 5 to 8; and
 - b) growing said plants.
- 14) The method according to claim 13, wherein said plant is a corn plant.
- 15) An isolated DNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No 4 or SEQ ID No 6.
- 16) An isolated DNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group of SEQ ID No 3; SEQ ID No 5 and SEQ ID No 11.
- 17) A method for isolating a corn root preferential promoter region, comprising the steps of:
 - a) identifying a genomic fragment encoding an RNA transcript from which a cDNA can be synthesized, said cDNA comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID 3 or SEQ ID No 5 or functional equivalents;

- b) isolating a DNA region upstream of a nucleotide sequence encoding the protein with the amino acid of SEQ ID No 4 or SEQ ID No 6 or functional equivalents.

18) A corn root preferential promoter obtained by the method of claim 17.